



**CITY OF SCOTTSDALE  
McDOWELL SONORAN PRESERVE COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING**

**Thursday, May 3, 2012**

**Florence Ely Nelson Desert Park  
8950 E. Pinnacle Peak Road  
Scottsdale, AZ 85255**

**MINUTES**

**PRESENT:** James Heitel, Chairman  
Fred Klein, Vice Chairman  
Susan Wheeler, Commissioner  
Marg Nelssen, Commissioner (arrived at 5:08 p.m.)  
Robert Frost, Commissioner  
Con Englehorn, Commissioner  
Mike Milillo, Commissioner

**STAFF:** Bill Murphy  
Kroy Ekblaw  
Claire Miller  
Robbin Schweitzer

**GUESTS:** Mike Nolan  
David Hay  
Jack McEnroe  
Mike Mayer  
Dan Gruber

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Heitel called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m.

**2. ROLL CALL**

Members present as noted above.

### **3. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mike Mayer spoke about Game and Fish regulations and the negative effects of allowing bow hunting in the Preserve.

Chair Heitel requested that Mr. Mayer hold any further comment for Item 6, which addresses the issue of wildlife in the Preserve.

### **4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Approval of the Regular Meeting minutes of April 5, 2012

**COMMISSIONER FROST MOVED TO APPROVE THE APRIL 5, 2012 MCDOWELL SONORAN PRESERVE COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES. SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER WHEELER, THE MOTION CARRIED WITH A VOTE OF SIX (6) TO ZERO (0). COMMISSIONER NELSEN NOT YET PRESENT.**

### **5. MCDOWELL SONORAN CONSERVANCY UPDATE**

Mr. Nolan updated the Commission on Conservancy activities including construction and maintenance projects and the progress of the Pathfinders. He noted that marketing hikes under the website meetup.com has proven to be successful. He discussed the successful tactics used to increase participation in school tours and the trailside naturalist program. Based on a Commissioner's suggestion, Mr. Nolan agreed that the MSPC meeting schedule could be included in the Conservancy's email blasts.

### **6. STATUS OF WILDLIFE STUDIES**

Mr. Ekblaw highlighted information about studies currently underway and noted that if they wish, Game and Fish is available to meet with the Commission in the future. Currently, a baseline study of insects of ground dwelling type, flying insects, flora, birds, reptiles and amphibians, and small mammals is underway. Next year, large animals will be initiated with the assistance of a number of scientists, volunteers and students.

Last summer, through an agreement with Game and Fish, a study of the area of 128<sup>th</sup> Street and Dynamite was started. The findings are expected to be available in the fall.

Mr. Ekblaw noted that City Ordinance requires that an environmental analysis be done in association with all of the trailheads. The analyses typically do not include wildlife; however, they are sensitive to the terrain, topography and washes.

Discussion ensued regarding the purview of Game and Fish with regards to hunting, sign posting requirements, options for mitigation that could be proposed to Game and Fish, public safety as it relates to bow hunting, and baseline data collection.

Mike Mayer continued his public comment regarding Game and Fish, bow hunting, the importance of baseline impact studies, and the effects of the motorcycle event held annually at WestWorld on the environment.

**7. LAND ACQUISITION PRIORITY - RECOMMENDATION TO CITY COUNCIL FOR 2013**

Mr. Ekblaw noted that the acquisition proposals for parcels A, B, and C, representing the 6,400 acres that will provide connection between the Preserve and the Tonto National Forest, are moving forward. He reviewed the short-term projections chart and gave examples of several possible acquisition scenarios based on various tax and interest rate possibilities and the availability of Growing Smarter funds. Mr. Ekblaw asked the Commission to consider making a recommendation to Council to pursue the south parcel in 2013, noting anticipation of an auction toward the end of 2013.

Commissioners were given the opportunity to ask questions.

**COMMISSIONER FROST MOVED THAT THE COMMISSION AUTHORIZE STAFF TO GO TO CITY COUNCIL WITH A RECOMMENDATION TO PURCHASE THE SOUTH 2,400 ACRES OF PRESERVE LAND. VICE CHAIR KLEIN SECONDED THE MOTION.**

Commissioners asked clarifying questions and made comments.

**THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY WITH A VOTE OF SEVEN (7) TO ZERO (0).**

**8. ACCESS AND TRAILHEAD PROJECTS**

Mr. Ekblaw distributed a project map and reviewed projects that are in various stages in the work plan and CIP programs for Lost Dog Trailhead, Gateway, Tom's Thumb, Pinnacle Peak, Brown's Ranch, and areas of the northern area including gating and signage.

Commissioners were given the opportunity to ask questions.

**9. FLORA SIGNAGE**

Mr. Murphy noted that based on research it was determined that Gateway and Lost Dog will have interpretive trail signage, Sunrise will have signage, and trees and shrubs will be installed through the parking lot up to the beginning of the trails.

**9. STAFF REPORTS**

- **Financial Report**

Mr. Ekblaw said that revenues for March were strong at \$2.4 million and noted that expenditures were chiefly due to the ongoing work at Brown's Ranch and Tom's Thumb as well as the land surveys and due diligence related to the land acquisitions. He suggested that Lee Guillory from Financial Services be invited to the September meeting for a discussion about projections and the bond process.

- **Commission Work Plan**

Mr. Ekblaw briefly reviewed the Commission Work Plan and noted that APS has cleaned up from construction and grading and should secure approvals for revegetation through the summer and have work completed by the fall.

- **Commercial User Fee Report**

Mr. Ekblaw reviewed statistics resulting from the commercial users and fees, which total just over \$10,000 for the year including user fees and application fees.

Mr. Murphy explained that currently those fees go into the General Fund. A special revenue account can to be created to roll the funds back into the Preserve.

- **North Area Planning**

- **Open Houses in April**

Mr. Ekblaw discussed the open house process, noting that approximately 200 people attended the open houses and that comment forms, emails and phone calls continue to come in. Participants have been encouraged to return comments by May 14. Comments on the simpler topics will be brought to the Commission in June and comments on more involved issues will be presented in September.

- **Brown's Ranch Update**

Mr. Ekblaw reported that the bid opening is scheduled for May 10 and will go to Council to be awarded in June. Construction is expected to begin in July with an approximate completion date in approximately a year.

- **Tom's Thumb Update**

Mr. Ekblaw said that Tom's Thumb construction is making progress. The steel roof structure is being installed and the entry drive and overflow parking is nearing completion. A soft opening will be held during the summer.

- **Current Projects Update**

Ms. Miller said that the primary focus has been on installation of fences and gates. She mentioned the involvement of the Police Department in the Preserve, noting that a detail was available to focus on making contacts in the northern area on Sunday, April 22.

In response to a Commissioner question, Ms. Miller said that two-strand smooth wire fencing is being installed along 136th Street and will be used where possible in an effort to be wildlife friendly. Mr. Ekblaw noted that in some areas, including 136th Street, more substantial gates made of pipe rail will be installed.

Mr. Ekblaw noted that SLUP discussions are continuing with the State. Once discussions with the State are completed, the Pima and Dynamite and Rawhide Wash projects will be brought forward.

**10. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

Commissioner Frost commended staff for their efforts at the open houses held in April.

Commissioner Englehorn noted that when working on the Windgate Pass Trail a full ATV track was found near that location. He asked that follow-up be done to determine whether there were signage violations on the part of Maricopa County.

**11. AGENDA ITEMS FOR JUNE 7, 2012**

- Future Land Cost/Benefit Analysis and Survey (June)
- MSC Donation for Interpretive Trail and Lost Dog Wash Trailhead

Mr. Ekblaw noted that he would contact Game and Fish to determine a date that they would be available to attend a Commission meeting.

**12. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 6:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
A/V Tronics, Inc. DBA AVTranz.